



The Child Care Partnership Project

How Are **WE** Doing? A Self-Assessment Tool for Partnerships



U.S. Department
of Health and
Human Services
Administration for
Children and Families
Child Care Bureau



Principle 1: Successful partnerships have clear goals.

	Disagree				Agree
Our partnership has developed a vision and clear goals.	1	2	3	4	5
Development of the vision and goals was informed by a comprehensive needs assessment of existing child care needs and resources in our target community.	1	2	3	4	5
The vision and goals were developed through a process inclusive of all of the partners.	1	2	3	4	5
The vision and goals provide an ongoing framework that energizes and directs the work of the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
The vision and goals are revisited regularly and confirmed and/or adapted as our partnership evolves in response to community needs and opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Principle 2: Successful partnerships aim to achieve positive results and regularly measure their progress.¹

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Our partnership has collaboratively identified desired results.	1	2	3	4	5
Program and service strategies chosen by the partnership are clearly related to the defined results, and research on effective practice.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has collaboratively defined specific indicators and performance measures that tell us whether we are making progress toward our desired results.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has developed a timetable and a process for measuring changes in indicators and performance measures.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has developed necessary tools and forms to gather indicator and performance measure data.	1	2	3	4	5
Ongoing collection of data is used continuously in decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has considered and acquired any technical assistance necessary to design and implement a methodologically sound process for measuring partnership results.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has estimated the cost of tracking performance and integrated this expense into the budget.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes

¹ The terms used in this section are based on the *Guide to Measuring Results for Partnerships*. The Guide includes definitions of these terms and descriptions of how to implement a process for identifying and measuring desired results.



Principle 3: Successful partnerships involve families and include them when developing programs and services.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Membership in our partnership reflects the diversity in the community we serve.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership recognizes the range of important caregivers in children's lives and strives to engage mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other caretakers.	1	2	3	4	5
Parents are actively engaged in the decision-making of our partnership, are supported and comfortable in their role, and encourage other parents to participate.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership reaches out to involve parents by adjusting schedules and logistics to accommodate parent needs, and providing training and development opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
Regular feedback from involved parents on the effectiveness of partnership activities informs the partnership planning process.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Principle 4: Successful partnerships are broad-based and include key stakeholders from the beginning.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Our partnership has successfully engaged a broad base of partners from a range of organizations in both the public and private sectors (see list below of possible partners).	1	2	3	4	5
The broad base of stakeholders involved in the partnership is fully invested in the work of the partnership, and actively and regularly participates in partnership activities.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has acknowledged and addressed the different organizational cultures that different partners come from and their differing expectations and motivations for working in partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership provides opportunities for partners to get to know each other and build the relationships necessary for success.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes

Possible Partners

Private Sector

- Child Care providers
- Community service providers
- Parents
- Heads of neighborhood associations/community organizations
- Philanthropy – national and community foundations
- Employers
- Union Leaders
- Banks
- Community Development Corporations
- Chamber of Commerce president or CEO
- Hospital CEO or department head
- University leaders
- United Way executive director or volunteers
- Religious leaders

Public Sector

- Mayor and councilmen/women
- Governor and state representatives
- Directors of county/state departments/agencies
- State Child Care Administrator
- Police Chief or officers
- Head of City Parks and recreation department
- Chairs of Parent/Teacher Associations
- School Board Members
- School Principals
- Head Start Directors and teachers



Principle 5: Successful partnerships involve powerful champions and make their initiatives visible to the public.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Individuals in the public and private sector who have the authority to make decisions, commit resources, and influence public policy are actively and regularly engaged in our partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
High profile leaders involved in the partnership take advantage of opportunities to promote the vision and work of the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership hosts events to create awareness about and increase support for the work of the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has a strategic communications plan, including regular contact with the media and key constituencies about the work of the partnership, public service announcements, press conferences, letters to the editor, and opinion pieces.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has estimated the resources necessary to implement the communications plan and has included this cost in the budget.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Principle 6: Successful partnerships establish clear governance structures that define partner roles and responsibilities.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Our partnership has established a clear organizational structure (for example: creating a new non-profit, establishing an advisory board, etc), and created an organizational chart.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has agreed upon the roles that individual partners will play, and ensured that all partners understand and accept the responsibilities of those roles. All roles are defined in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has a designated chairperson who is a respected stakeholder, is skilled in group dynamics, and is focused on moving the collaborative agenda forward.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has designated a fiscal agent and established a budgeting process and a schedule for reporting on finances.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has assigned staffing duties, such as preparing agendas, documenting decisions, following up on assignments, convening meetings, and facilitating communication.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Principle 7: Successful partnerships establish and adhere to a set of ground rules that guide the partnership in its work.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Our partnership has established ground rules that guide core processes with the input and agreement of all partners. (Ground rules address issues such as convening and conducting meetings, communicating with each other, sharing information, and making decisions.)	1	2	3	4	5
The ground rules are available at all meetings, new partners are introduced to the ground rules, and all partners understand and adhere to the ground rules.	1	2	3	4	5
The ground rules are effective in keeping the work of the partnership focused and productive, without stifling useful debate or preventing full participation by all partners.	1	2	3	4	5
Partnership meetings have a clear agenda, remain focused, and result in decisions and progress.	1	2	3	4	5
Results and next steps of meetings are clearly documented and shared with all partners.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has clearly defined a process for resolving contentious issues that are impeding progress.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has established and regularly uses both formal and informal channels of communication.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Principle 8: Successful partnerships are flexible, adopt an entrepreneurial mindset, and adapt to changing conditions and resources.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Our partnership includes individuals who are skilled in understanding and acting in the political arena.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has established strategic alliances with policy makers and advocates to keep track of changes in programs and policies.	1	2	3	4	5
The planning and work of our partnership is informed by current public policy developments at the local, state, and federal level.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has established a continuous improvement process to assess the effectiveness of current work and adapt to changing conditions and resources.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has the ability to convene quickly and act decisively to respond to current events, public policy activities, or funding opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Principle 9: Successful partnerships enable all partners to benefit by drawing on their strengths and contributions.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
All partners involved in our project have an understanding of who the other partners are, what organizations they come from, and what those organizations do.	1	2	3	4	5
All partners involved in our project are respected and listened to at partnership meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has limited turnover, with a core group of partners that remains involved and active in the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
All partners involved in our project are investing resources in the project, whether they are financial or in-kind.	1	2	3	4	5
Partners honor commitments they make to the project and complete agreed upon tasks on time.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership acknowledges and celebrates the contributions of its members.	1	2	3	4	5
All of the partners involved in our project are satisfied with the role they are playing and feel they are making worthwhile contributions to the success of the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Principle 10: Successful partnerships work to maintain momentum and to sustain their work over time.

	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
Our partnership is aware of and networks with related initiatives and partnerships in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has discussed and agreed upon the desired long-term role of the partnership (permanent entity, functional partnership that will last until goals are fulfilled, etc.) and the desired scale of partnership work.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has developed a multi-year revenue strategy that projects needed revenue, targets sources of funding for partnership activities (local, state, federal and private), and specifies who will be responsible for mobilizing resources.	1	2	3	4	5
All fiscal commitments of our partnership are documented in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership has identified and mobilized non-financial resources from partner organizations and other entities throughout the community.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership takes time on a regular basis to celebrate our successes.	1	2	3	4	5
Our partnership shares our successes with the media, funders, and policymakers.	1	2	3	4	5
Total					

Notes



Circle the range that your total score falls into for each of the principles on the chart below:

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Needs Improve ment</i> → <i>Strength</i>
Principle 1: Successful partnerships have clear goals.	5.....10.....15.....20.....25
Principle 2: Successful partnerships aim to achieve positive results and regularly measure their progress.	8.....16.....24.....32.....40
Principle 3: Successful partnerships involve families and include them when developing programs and services.	5.....10.....15.....20.....25
Principle 4: Successful partnerships are broad-based and include key stakeholders from the beginning.	4.....8.....12.....16.....20
Principle 5: Successful partnerships involve powerful champions and make their initiatives visible to the public.	5.....10.....15.....20.....25
Principle 6: Successful partnerships establish clear governance structures that define partner roles and responsibilities.	5.....10.....15.....20.....25
Principle 7: Successful partnerships establish and adhere to a set of ground rules that guide the partnership in its work.	7.....14.....21.....28.....35
Principle 8: Successful partnerships are flexible, adopt an entrepreneurial mindset, and adapt to changing conditions and resources.	5.....10.....15.....20.....25
Principle 9: Successful partnerships enable all partners to benefit by drawing on their strengths and contributions.	7.....14.....21.....28.....35
Principle 10: Successful partnerships work to maintain momentum and to sustain their work over time.	7.....14.....21.....28.....35
Overall	58.....116.....174.....232.....290

The Child Care Partnership Project

Public-private partnership projects are an increasingly popular vehicle for expanding and improving services for children and families. In the child care arena, individuals and organizations in the public and private sectors share a mutual interest in the availability of affordable, quality child care that is responsive to the developmental needs of children. In recent years, many states and communities have initiated partnership projects that bring together government, business, philanthropy, families, and service providers in an effort to most effectively assess and address child care needs. The Child Care Partnership Project is a technical assistance project funded by the federal Child Care Bureau that is developing resources to assist states and communities to create and sustain effective partnership projects that will enhance the child care resources available to families.

The Self-Assessment Tool

The Partnership Self-Assessment is a tool to help partnerships at all levels of development to assess and improve the effectiveness of their collaboration. It is based on, and meant to be used in conjunction with, the *Guide to Successful Partnerships for Child Care*.¹ The Guide contains 10 principles of successful partnerships and a number of strategies related to those principles. The 10 principles were developed based on feedback from successful partnership project leaders throughout the country regarding the factors that they view as most critical to partnership success. They are:

Principle 1: Successful partnerships have clear goals.

Principle 2: Successful partnerships aim to achieve positive results and regularly measure their progress.

Principle 3: Successful partnerships involve families and include them when developing programs and services.

Principle 4: Successful partnerships are broad-based and include key stakeholders from the beginning.

Principle 5: Successful partnerships involve powerful champions and make their initiatives visible to the public.

Principle 6: Successful partnerships establish clear governance structures that define partner roles and responsibilities.

Principle 7: Successful partnerships establish and adhere to a set of ground rules that guide the partnership in its work.

Principle 8: Successful partnerships are flexible, adopt an entrepreneurial mindset, and adapt to changing conditions and resources.

Principle 9: Successful partnerships enable all partners to benefit by drawing on their strengths and contributions.

Principle 10: Successful partnerships work to maintain momentum and to sustain their work over time.

The Self-Assessment Tool allows partners to rate their progress in implementing individual elements related to each principle. The ratings for each principle can then be entered on the summary chart to provide an overall picture of the effectiveness of collaboration, which areas are strong, and which areas need improvement. Partners can then find ideas and strategies for strengthening their performance under specific principles within the *Guide to Successful Public-Private Partnerships for Child Care*, and within other tools and materials developed by the project.

Options for Using the Tool

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool can be used in a variety of ways depending on the level of development and the priorities of a partnership. For partnerships that are just getting started, the Self-Assessment Tool provides a list of principles and tasks that can guide the process of engaging partners and developing

¹ The *Guide to Successful Partnerships for Child Care* can be obtained from the Child Care Partnership Project website at nccic.org/ccpartnerships or through the National Child Care Information Center at 1-800-616-2242.

partnership activities. For partnership projects that are more established, the self-assessment can be used as one component of larger efforts to evaluate partnership progress. The Self-Assessment tool involves essentially assessing the **process** of bringing partners together and working to achieve desired results. Other tools have to be employed by partnership projects to measure whether they are actually making progress toward their desired results. If a partnership finds that they are not achieving their desired results, the self-assessment tool may help to determine why. The Self-Assessment Tool can also be used as a relationship-building tool by providing an opportunity for all of the partners involved in a project to assess and discuss their perceptions of partnership progress.

Building and maintaining effective partnership projects require dedicated time and ongoing attention to the collaborative process. The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool can help partnerships to focus on, assess, and improve the quality of their collaborative efforts.